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## Investigating Youth Physical Activity Experiences and Mental Wellbeing, Before, During and Post Covid 19

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Rose, Lauren (2021). Investigating Youth Physical Activity Experiences and Mental Wellbeing, Before, During and Post Covid 19. Postgraduate Research Poster Competition, The Open University.

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Version: Poster

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# Investigating Youth Physical Activity Experiences and Mental Wellbeing, Before, During and Post-Covid 19

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**Physical Activity (PA) ...**  
**Lowers Depression and Anxiety Risk**  
Improves Bone Health  
**Increases Self-esteem**  
Reduces Obesity  
(Guthold et al., 2019)



## Decline in Youth PA Levels...

Globally 81% of adolescents are insufficiently active (Guthold et al., 2019)

**England – Only 22% of 5-15 year olds meet daily physical activity recommendations (NHS Digital, 2015)**  
In 2018, 25% of England's secondary schools reduced Physical Education time (YST, 2018)

**Mental Wellbeing...** “Thoughts and feelings and coping with the ups and downs of everyday life” (CABA, 2021)

## Concerns...

In 2017, 1/8<sup>th</sup> of 5-19 year olds in England experienced a mental health disorder (Sadler et al., 2018)  
**Globally, 16% of disease & harm in adolescents is caused by mental health disorders (WHO, 2019)**



## Impact of Covid-19 - Early Evidence



**Schools across the world were closed, some for 50+ weeks (UNESCO, n.d.)**

50% of adolescents reported a decrease in PA during lockdown (Ng et al., 2020)

1/3 of children and adolescents have experienced an increase in anxiety, loneliness and negative behaviours (Francisco et al., 2020)

**Research Question: “How has the Covid-19 pandemic influenced children’s and adolescents’ experiences of physical activity and their mental wellbeing?”**

**Aims:** 1. To gather adult and youth perspectives on the impact of the pandemic on children’s and adolescents access to, participation in, and enjoyment of physical activity.  
2. Gather adult and youth perspectives on whether the changes in physical activity participation due to the pandemic have impacted the mental wellbeing of children and adolescents, and in what way.

**Methods:** 1. Online survey of parents, teachers and sport coaches, regarding PA provision for the youth in their care during the Covid-19 pandemic, available throughout England.  
2. Case study – Twelve 10-12 year olds (from 2 schools) and their parents will take part in interviews and focus groups to gain a deeper insight into the children’s experiences of PA before, during and now as we enter a new normal, following the pandemic.

**What makes my research different?**

1. Very few studies have explored both youth and adult perspectives
2. This study aims to learn from both pre- and post- Covid PA experiences, not just one or the other